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ABSTRACT

The document presents a position statement of the Division on Career Development of the Council for Exceptional Children concerning the transition of youth with disabilities to adult life. Stages of career development from awareness through exploration, preparation, assimilation, and continuing education are explained. The crucial element in transition is seen to be whether individuals are contributing to their own benefit, and in part, to that of the larger society. Productive work is defined and recent legislation, especially Amendments of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 98-199 covering independent living, vocational training, postsecondary education, and competitive employment is explained. The position statement of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services concerning transition is summarized. New roles for traditional service providers including special education, guidance, community based organizations, and parents are specified. A bibliography of approximately 90 items and 16 addresses of additional resources are also included. (DB)

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ED299757

Transition

THE TRANSITION OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES TO ADULT LIFE: A POSITION STATEMENT

Division On Career Development

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The Division on Career Development was established in 1976 as one of 12 divisions in The Council for Exceptional Children. Its goals are to organize representatives from all disciplines who are involved in, or would like to be involved in, career development of exceptional children, youth, and adults. Career development is a process which facilitates responsible and satisfying life roles — that is, student, worker, consumer, family member, and citizen —through the utilization of teaching, counseling and community interventions. The Division will serve as a catalyst to bring about efficient and effective programs of career awareness, explorations, preparation, and assimilation for exceptional individuals from early childhood through adulthood.

The Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Adult Life: A Position Statement is a product of The Division on Career Development, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1987.

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Developing the Position Statement

Jane A. Razeghi

There are several reasons why the Division on Career Development (DCD) has developed a position statement regarding the transition of disabled individuals from school to employment and independent living in the community. The initial reason began several years ago during the Summer of 1984. With input from the then DCD President, George Fair, and the President Elect, Charles Kokaska, DCD's governmental affairs chairperson, Jane Razeghi, prepared a competitive proposal. This proposal was submitted to the University of Illinois' National Network Project which reviewed and decided to fund it. Therefore, by the Fall of 1984, DCD was awarded the sum of $2,000.00 to continue its project's efforts.

One of the major reasons for writing the proposal was to give DCD the opportunity to identify the role of transition in relationship to career development. In undertaking such an effort it was originally proposed that DCD would work with other professional vocational education and vocational rehabilitation organizations in clarifying the new emphasis on their roles and responsibilities in the transition process. It was hoped that each of the professional organizations could look at and assess the impact of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitiation Services' (OSERS) position statement regarding the transition of disabled youth to employment and community living. The reality of this original proposal was that the other professional organizations preferred to develop their own positions before joining efforts with DCD.

Therefore, DCD's Board decided that the second project year would be focused on obtaining the input of DCD's membership through a survey in the DCD newsletter (June, 1985). It was also decided that the project funds would be used to issue a special publication on transition that would provide information and direction to DCD members and others in the field who believe in the importance of career development for disabled individuals.

In order to obtain additional input from DCD members, special sessions were held at the Transition Conference in Boston, March, 1985, and at the International Council of Exceptional Children Conference in New Orleans in April, 1985. These sessions were recorded and whatever draft of the DCD position statement existed at the time was revised to reflect the relevant comments at the sessions. Through the newsletter survey and the special sessions, every attempt was made to provide an opportunity for all DCD members to participate in the development of DCD's position statement on transition. The results are evidenced in the position statement in this publication.

The Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Adult Life: A Position Statement of the Division on Career Development, The Council for Exceptional Children

Jane Razeghi, Charles Kokaska,
Kathleen Gruenhagen, George Fair

The Division on Career Development

On October 13, 1976, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) approved its twelfth division, the Division on Career Development (DCD). This division focuses on the career development of disabled* children, youth, and adults.

The purpose of DCD is to provide an organization for individuals from such disciplines as guidance and counseling, personnel preparation, private and public administration, regular education, special education, and vocational rehabilitation who are involved in the career development of disabled children, youth, and adults. In order to meet its goal, DCD encourages and promotes professional growth, research, legislation, information dissemination, technical assistance, and interactions among DCD divisions, other organizations, and agencies which are concerned and involved in the career development of disabled individuals.

Stages of Career Development

DCD believes that career development for disabled individuals is a sequential, life-long learning process that begins at the earliest level of education. During their educational programming, disabled students have an opportunity to learn the academic, daily living, personal-social, and occupational competencies, and specific vocational skills necessary for attaining their highest levels of economic, personal, and social fulfullment. These competencies and skills are obtained and demonstrated during progressive stages. The awareness and exploration stages lay the foundation for greater success in the individual's transition to employment and other work roles which occur in the preparation and assimilation stages.

- Awareness — This stage includes opportunities for one to become familiar with the attitudes, information, and self-understanding necessary to the values of a work oriented society.

*Disabled, for the purpose of this statement, includes all handicapping conditions.

• Exploration	This stage includes opportunities for one to investigate the aptitudes, interests, and requirements necessary to fulfill various paid and unpaid work roles.
• Preparation	This stage includes opportunities to acquire and practice attitudes and skills that qualify one for paid and unpaid work roles. The process of transition for disabled youth usually begins here.
• Assimilation (Placement & Follow-Along)	This stage includes opportunities to adapt to the demands and rewards of one's work roles. The transition process which begins in the student's last years of school, ends in this stage with the successful acquisition and maintenance of a productive work role.
• Continuing Education	This stage includes opportunities to seek change in knowledge and abilities that provide success in one's work roles.

Transition

DCD views career development as an on-going, sequential process in assisting disabled children, youth, and adults in achieving meaningful work roles such as that of student, consumer, citizen, family member, and employee. DCD imposes no limitations on the expectations of what each individual can achieve because all people are of value. All individuals can continue to change, to grow, and to learn. Within this broad framework of career development, DCD views transition as that phase of career development that involves the preparation of the student for success in employment and other work roles.

Although DCD believes that the transition of the individual from a student to a worker is an important change, it also believes that this is just one of the many changes that accompany the development of a person over an expanse of time. In addition, the role of worker ought not be limited to that of a paid one. For example, the parent who raises a child in the home is in a career role as much as the parent who is employed in a community setting.

The crucial element is whether individuals are contributing to their own benefit, and in part, to that of the larger society. The foundation for transition rests upon the total educational programming at all levels, including preschool, and not entirely upon high school programming, although it is a tremendously influential factor.

Productive Work

Productive work is either paid or unpaid, and performed by individuals in various roles (student, citizen, volunteer, family member). DCD believes that productive work contributes to the benefit of the individual, the family, and to society. There is a place for both paid and unpaid productive work. While paid work should be one of the major goals of transition, unpaid productive work can benefit many individuals in that it becomes a tool leading to employment. DCD recognizes the reality that the objectives within transition may differ depending on the needs of a specific individual, the severity of the disability, and other factors. Society often imposes many barriers to the individual moving through the transitional process, which must be overcome. Therefore, the transitional process should include realistic concerns with preparing students for productive work, which may include paid employment.

Recent Legislation

DCD defines career development for disabled individuals as the process which facilitates reasonable and satisfying life roles, such as student, worker, consumer, family member and citizen, through the utilization of teaching, counseling, and community interventions. Within the broad framework of career development, "transition" is that period of time between school and employment when the student is prepared for employment and other work roles. Parents and professionals who are interested in the long term success of disabled individuals are also concerned with organizing effective transitional programs. One of the major reasons for this interest has been the contrast between the high rate of unemployment of disabled persons and the results of recent studies indicating their capabilities for employment. This contrast has led to congressional legislation. It is important to be aware of such legislation because it is the legislation, regulations, and court decisions upon which "policy" is formulated and based. The direct result of such policy is programming. Today, recent policy has been translated and interpreted to mean transitional programming for disabled youth.

A study of history indicates that when society as a whole has felt that certain social problems must be addressed, it has traditionally turned to the public schools. Examples of this include efforts toward the acheivement of equality through integration and addressing poverty and under-achievement through compensatory education programs. In these instances, society was identifying certain essential rights to education and the opportunity to be prepared for employment. In the past, society attempted to extend "equality of opportunity" to disabled children and youth as evidenced in the legislation to provide a "free appropriate public education" (Education of All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142). With the most recent legislation and regulations, there echoes an extension of "equality of opportunity" to the living. The following is a brief summary of this legislation.

Amendments of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 98-199, 1983

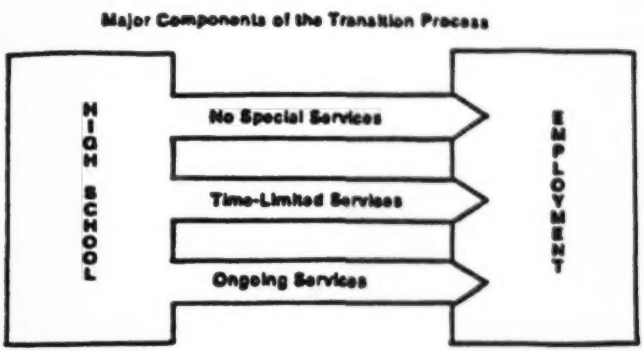
Section 626 of this legislation is considered by many to be the transitional authority for disabled children and youth. This section can be interpreted to direct special education toward cooperation with vocational education, as well as community based agencies and organizations; integration of disabled with non-disabled students to the maximum extent possible; and the preparation of all disabled youth for competitive employment.

This legislation can be interpreted to indicate that secondary special education should begin to develop strategies and techniques for transition to, among other things:

1. independent living,
2. vocational training,
3. postsecondary education, and
4. competitive employment.

In keeping with Section 626, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the agency charged with the implementation of this legislation, issued a position statement regarding the transition of individuals with disabilities from school to working life and other aspects of adult living. The OSERS position statement faces the fact that the needs of adolescents and adults with disabilities are very complex and are matched with an equally complex service system with which to respond to these needs. OSERS' statement also presents the following transition model:

Figure 1
OSERS Transition Model



The left side of this model indicates that both special education and vocational education programs in high school are the primary foundation from which transition services should evolve. The three bridges of the model depict the variety of transition services, placing them in three basic categories. The first bridge, "No Special Services," indicates that transition is accomplished without any special services. It relies on generic services available to anyone in the community, even if special accomodations are necessary within these services for individuals with disabilities. Such generic services include postsecondary education such as community colleges, or even higher education as received at college and universities.

The second bridge, "Time-Limited Service," refers to specialized, short-term services, such as vocational rehabilitiation, where the presence of a disability is usually required in order to qualify a person for access to the service. The third bridge, "Ongoing Services," does not represent an extensive service delivery system, especially when the goal of transition is employment. This is the type of service which is often referred to as "supported employment." The concept of supported employment is new and is primarily federally funded through grants and contracts.

The overall goal of the OSERS model is competitive employment with the following clarification:

> This concern with employment does not indicate a lack of interest in other aspects of adult living. Success in social, personal, leisure, and other adult roles enhances opportunities both to obtain employment and enjoy its benefits . . . The focus on employment as a central outcome of transition provides an objective measure of transition success.

A New Emphasis on Responsibilities

As a result of P.L. 98-199, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, and the OSERS position statement on transition, DCD believes that the roles and responsibilities of some disciplines and agencies have received a new emphasis. DCD has always considered career development for disabled children and youth to be one of the major responsibilities of special education. Relevant career development activities were to be implemented by special educators in their classes, as well as being individualized, when appropriate, to meet each student's unique needs. The recent legislation and the OSERS position statement reinforce and emphasize what DCD has considered a major responsiblity of special education. The chart that follows summarizes DCD's perspective on the direction of the new emphasis.

Figure 2
DCD's Perspective on Transition

Provider	Previous Focus	Expanded Focus
Special Education	• remediating student's problems or weaknesses; • teaching reading, writing, arithmetic.	• assuming the leadership role in providing career development activities in the classroom; • providing support to: - regular educators - guidance counselors - vocational educators - parents and others - administrators; • interacting more with community for productive work and living independently.
Guidance	• advising primarily nondisabled students	• taking a more active role in career planning for disabled students in conjunction with the student's parents and special educators; • initiating *early* career planning with parents and students, in conjunction with special educators, to allow students to obtain the academic credits for graduation, as well as receive vocational training.
Community Based Organizations	• providing programs for disabled youth who have exited the public schools	• establishing linkages with school systems in order to facilitate a continuum of services to disabled students; • serving as resources to school based programs.
Parents	• obtaining immediate placement of the child	• developing an interest and concern for the child's several life roles; • planning early with special educators and guidance counselors for more than one life role.

Conclusion

The fields of special education and rehabilitation have focused on the concept of transition and related services for handicapped people. This increased awareness has been accompanied by several statements and documents concerning the initiation of transition services. The Division on Career Development, The Council for Exceptional Children, has always advocated the progression of exceptional people from dependency to a valued status in society. This increased awareness about transition and the numerous programs that will flourish as a result of community support for them is yet another valuable effort to provide handicapped people with the opportunity to achieve a valued status in society. The Division on Career Development adds its support to these efforts as well as its views on the scope of these important endeavors.

Resources and Readings: Transition

Laura L. Mohr

A selected review of the current literature reflects TRANSITION emerging as a focus for the education of exceptional individuals. The literature also reflects differences in the meaning of transition for special education and/or how transition programs should be implemented. With the many and varied concepts of transition programming existing, the intent of this bibliographic review is to present a selected list of resources and readings related primarily to the transition movement with a focus on the change from school years to adult life which has an underlying view that transition rests upon on-going, sequential career development as a life-long process.

The articles, books, projects, materials, and media presented below are only a selection of resources and readings available on the topic of transition. Additional information would also be found by cross-referencing related topics such as career education, vocational education, vocational rehabilitation services, and supported employment.

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Addresses for resources are listed below:

The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 22091-1589

HEATH Resource Center
One Dupont Circle, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036-1193

SpecialNet
National Systems Management, Inc.
2021 K Street, N.W. Suite 315
Washington, DC 20006

Materials Development Center
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute
University of Wisonsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

Office of Special Education Programs
Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Swizer Building
Washington, DC 20202

DCD Conference Proceedings
Las Vegas (1985)
Attn: Donn E. Brolin
Career Development Projects
111 Education Building
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, MO 65211

Council Chief State School Officers
Resource Center on Educational Equity
400 North Capitol, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

DCD Publications Committee
Laura Mohr, Chairperson
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1960 Kenny Rd.
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

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330 C Street, S.W. Room 3132
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DCD Conference Proceedings
Nashville (1987) (in press)
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Clemson University
Department of Education
Clemson, SC 29631

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